




Speech By
Hon. Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 20 February 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Far North Queensland, Tourism and Manufacturing

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (9.06 pm): The Crisafulli government values regional and rural Queensland. I know firsthand that you cannot be making decisions for people in regional and rural Queensland while sitting in Brisbane. That is why it is my priority to spend as much time as I can outside of SEQ.

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Cairns and Palm Cove. A big part of our vision to return Queensland to a premier tourism destination is reinvigorating our Great Barrier Reef islands. That is why our government has taken the next step towards securing the future of Double Island off the coast of Cairns. Whilst in Cairns I had the privilege of announcing that the site of the former resort has been converted from a Land Act reserve to state owned freehold land. It is a significant change that allows us to negotiate a fit-for-purpose commercial lease to restore Double Island to the tourist icon it once was. This change gives us stronger powers to negotiate commercial leases and ensure the leaseholder provides world-class tourism offerings. Most importantly, it means we have more power to ensure leaseholders are accountable to Queenslanders.

The conversion to state owned freehold follows extensive consultation with the local community as well as market sounding. A real estate agent will be appointed in coming weeks and soon we will call for expressions of interest for operators interested in taking Double Island forward.

We promised Queenslanders a fresh start, and we are delivering. The former Labor government sat on their hands and let Double Island's potential go to waste. Locals were locked out. The island was left to decay. Well, not on my watch. We knew locals were fed up. We have listened and we are delivering.

We also want to see manufacturing thrive in regional Queensland. I had the privilege, whilst I was in the far north last week, of visiting two of Cairns's premier manufacturing businesses. The team from Norweld have grown their business over the last 50 years to develop some of the country's leading tray and canopy design packages. I would like to thank Norweld's General Manager, Steve Umback, and Executive Chairman, Jaime McIntosh, for taking the time to show me around. It is a first-class operation and I have to say I was very envious of the quality of the welding, and I would have loved to have taken a few tips away with me from that particular business.

I was also blown away by the size, scale and operations of CSF Industries, a family owned steel fabrication operation built on a foundation of family values which has grown to 150 staff and 19 apprentices, six of whom are female. Thank you to Karina Adams, who is part of the original CSF Industries family, and Tony Hogg for allowing me to tour their facility.

When regional and rural Queensland thrives, we all thrive. Our government will never take that for granted, nor the people who live and work with those communities.